



**University of  
Zurich<sup>UZH</sup>**

**Zurich Open Repository and  
Archive**

University of Zurich  
University Library  
Strickhofstrasse 39  
CH-8057 Zurich  
[www.zora.uzh.ch](http://www.zora.uzh.ch)

---

Year: 2016

---

**Briefe von Januar bis Mai 1546. Heinrich Bullinger: Ed. Reinhard  
Bodenmann, Alexandra Kess, and Judith Steiniger. Heinrich Bullinger  
Werke: Zweite Abteilung Briefwechsel 16. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag  
Zürich, 2014**

Giselbrecht, Rebecca A

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-129218>

Journal Article

Published Version

Originally published at:

Giselbrecht, Rebecca A (2016). Briefe von Januar bis Mai 1546. Heinrich Bullinger: Ed. Reinhard Bodenmann, Alexandra Kess, and Judith Steiniger. Heinrich Bullinger Werke: Zweite Abteilung Briefwechsel 16. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2014. *Renaissance Quarterly*, 69(1):336-338.

*Briefe von Januar bis Mai 1546.* Heinrich Bullinger.

Ed. Reinhard Bodenmann, Alexandra Kess, and Judith Steiniger. *Heinrich Bullinger Werke: Zweite Abteilung Briefwechsel 16*. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2014. 444 pp. €108.

---

The Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel (HBBW) has successfully edited yet another treasure trove of Heinrich Bullinger's correspondence. A little slice of history from January to May 1546 — a collection of sixteenth-century particulars — is now accessible in another polished critical edition. The HBBW is a long-term project located at the

University of Zurich, Institute for Swiss Reformation Studies. Approximately 12,000 extant epistles to and from Bullinger span the years 1524–75, and about 2,000 of these flowed from the Reformer's quill. The Zwingliverein defined the project to transcribe and edit the letters in chronological order in 1900, and the first edition was published in 1973.

In 1546, Bullinger was the central figure of the Swiss Reformation network that spanned Europe. The content of his January to May correspondence is a testimony to Bullinger's increasing popularity as counsel in a time of international, religious, and political turbulence, which grew more precarious as 1546 unfolded. The Schmalkaldic War (1546–47); the open conflicts between England and Scotland, France and England; and the Turks' attacks on Eastern Europe were dangerous to the Reformation. Therefore, it is not surprising that the volume of letters Bullinger received and the paper he needed to reply increased by almost 50 percent that year. In fact, the present volume is the first of three necessary to contain the epistles from 1546.

Forty-seven correspondents, primarily in Germany and France, exchanged letters with Bullinger in early 1546. Fifteen contacts joined Bullinger's epistolary network for the first time. The antistes continued his close contact with long-term friends including Joachim Vadian, Ambrosius Blarer, Josias Simler, Johannes Gast, Johannes Haller, and Matthias Erb. However, noteworthy international figures beyond middle Europe are also present. John Hooper, a Marian exile, is introduced to Bullinger in a letter from the merchant Richard Hills in Strasburg, while the Waldensian, Bernardino Ochino, eventually exiled from Zurich for his *Thirty Dialogues*, sent his one and only letter to Bullinger in January 1546.

Bullinger's chief aim between January and May 1546 continued to be his project to influence Oswald Myconius and the Basel reforms. His contact with students and interest in education are an underlying theme of the volume, whereby the Reformer's concern about dedicating his commentary on Luke, published in 1546, is a red thread throughout. Bullinger wanted to dedicate his work to one of the mayors of Augsburg, Hans Welser, whom Ambrosius Blarer regarded as pious and apt, while others, including Georg Frölich, questioned this.

The diverse scholarship needed to prepare the editions describes its potential audience. The team includes two historical theologians and a philologist, each a sixteenth-century expert. They know Bullinger and summarize his letter-writing style in 1546 with the words "tactical elegance" (22). Intellectual, cultural, and social historians can glean much from the volume. The linguistic might gain knowledge of sixteenth-century regional correspondence written chiefly in Latin and Early New High German, not to mention the grossly underestimated amount of information available in the letters for historical theology.

The volume is actually a visual feast. The typesetting is exceptional. In comparison to editions of other letters from 1546, this book is most complete. A register, exhaustive summaries of each letter, and notes are bound together in the one volume. The book hosts a complete table of contents with a comprehensive list containing detailed

information about letters 2318–451. A thirty-five-page introduction provides an overview of the volume. The introduction defines Bullinger's work, analyzes the political and social circumstances, and briefly addresses the theological content of the letters. The edition's precise historical apparatus prefaces each letter with a painstaking commentary; a critical apparatus in neat columns is directly below the text. The list of abbreviations and final index are user-friendly. The extensive historical-critical apparatus and printed product are the result of shared knowledge and analytical skills collected and improved to perfection over the last 115 years. The project has a unique gestalt thanks to the financial generosity of the Swiss National Foundation, the Swiss Evangelical Reformed Church, and the University of Zurich. The only problem with the sixteenth volume of Heinrich Bullinger's correspondence is that with its current perfection it will take an estimated twenty-nine more years to publish the remaining 9,000 letters.

REBECCA A. GISELBRECHT, *University of Zurich*